

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

GAME Sportswear

New York Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Game Sportswear Records Steady Growth After Making Organizational Changes

Client Profile:

GAME Sportswear, located in Elmsford, New York, manufactures, markets, and sells athletic outerwear throughout the United States. This 28 year-old family owned company has grown to 40 employees since its inception, and has annual sales exceeding \$10 million.

Situation:

By 2001, GAME Sportswear (GAME) had shown a steady five-year growth rate, but the CEO realized that his company had reached a critical point in its growth path. He would have to solicit outside help if the company were to continue to grow significantly. After several unsuccessful interviews with independent consultants, GAME met with the Hudson Valley Technology Development Center (HVTDC), a NIST MEP network affiliate and division of the New York Manufacturing Extension Partnership.

Solution:

HVTDC assessed GAME's operations and pointed out that, without a formal organizational structure, no one knew what their job description was or what was expected of them. The company was operating without a corporate policy and procedures manual. Simply put, GAME did not have a clear blueprint of where it was going and how it was going to keep ahead of its competition. HVTDC evaluated all positions and met with every key employee at GAME to determine whether or not the right person was doing each job, recommending changes in function or personnel as needed. HVTDC also helped GAME develop clear, specific job descriptions.

Having fine-tuned the organizational structure, HVTDC turned its attention to sales, marketing, and customer service. A survey of GAME's 18 independent sales representatives covering 30 states offered a hard-hitting but honest appraisal of the company's customer satisfaction ratings. The substance of their comments revealed to HVTDC that GAME was neither sales nor customer-driven, and customer service needed to improve immediately to ensure future growth. In response to HVTDC's findings, GAME doubled the number of independent sales representatives to cover all 50 states. The development of both a sales and customer service manual strengthened the relationship among GAME's customers, sales, and customer service representatives. Together, GAME Sportswear customer service managers and HVTDC conducted weekly customer training sessions to improve performance, and some staff members attended

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seminars to improve their customer service skills.

HVTDC's survey also indicated that GAME needed to keep field sales personnel informed of all headquarters changes, new product introductions, and policy and/or pricing changes. The company would also benefit by monitoring field performance versus monthly forecasts. HVTDC worked with GAME managers to develop the company's first sales and marketing plan for the year 2001. Since then, the plans for 2002 and 2003 have been written, and the 2004 plan will be completed by September 2003, prior to the peak season. GAME now measures itself stringently against the goals outlined in its plans.

Results:

Grew 12 to 18 percent per year over the last three years.

Strengthened organizational structure.

Evaluated and improved sales, marketing, and customer service.

Created sales and customer service manuals.

Created formal sales and marketing plans for 2001, 2002, and 2003.

Developed Warehouse Manager position.

Testimonial:

"[We met with the Hudson Valley Technology Development Center] and things started happening. So far, we've grown anywhere from 12 to 18 percent per year over the past three years. We have received a lot of positive feedback from our reps and 2002 was our best sales year yet. Orders were delivered on time, returns and errors were down, and we communicated better up and down the line. We have built a solid foundation for the future of this company."

Andrea Genovese, Sales Administrator